



**MEKONG
INSTITUTE**

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Curriculum Design Statement (CDS)

Modular Training on Special Economic Zones Management Practices

June 15-19, 2020

Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen, Thailand

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I. Introduction

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are formally incorporated areas, with characteristics such as (a) single management or administration; (b) well-defined geographic boundaries; (c) eligibility of local businesses for various financial and non-financial benefits such as tax incentives and access to specially provided infrastructure services within the zone; and (d) a separate customs area with streamlined procedures. A significant shift in SEZ development in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand is the growing attention to support local development and create “gateways” in SEZ borders to boost national economies.¹

With support from the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Special Fund, Mekong Institute (MI), in coordination with Thailand's Ministry of Commerce, is implementing the “Joint Development of Cross-Border Economic Zones” project in Lancang-Mekong countries.

As part of the project's activities, the following were implemented from 2018 to 2019:

- i) Conducted Joint Study and Survey on SEZs and Cross Border Economic Zones (CBEZs) to match complementary SEZs and identify prioritized areas;
- ii) Conducted first modular training on “Management of Special Economic Zones in LM Countries”;
- iii) Implemented country-wide action plans and synthesis and evaluation workshop on “Management of Special Economic Zones in LM Countries”;
- iv) Organized Structured Learning Visits (SLVs) to Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone and China-Lao and Mohan-Boten Economic Cooperation Zone;
- v) Established an online system on Economic Zones (EZ) to provide information for foreign investors;
- vi) Conducted training on the enhancement of business connections and information sharing of one-stop service and business centers between SEZs in the LM region; and
- vii) Be Implementing country-wide action plans and synthesis and evaluation workshop on “the enhancement of business connections and information sharing of one-stop service and business centers between SEZs in the LM region”.

Based on experiences and lessons learned from the first modular training, MI will organize the second modular training on “Special Economic Zones Management Practices” from June 15 to 19, 2020 at MI training center, Khon Kaen, Thailand. The training is designed for mid-level officials representing national ministries and provincial government departments, as well as those from academic institutions and business associations from Lancang-Mekong countries. Preference will be provided to officials directly involved in planning, finance and commerce, SEZ development, and customs.

Selected participants will go through three progressive phases of the modular training approach, as follows:

Phase 1: Learning Activity – Participants will conceptualize training content, engage in training sessions, and share practical insights on training topics during the five-day modular training at the MI Training Center from June 15 to 19, 2020.

Phase 2: Action Plan Implementation – At the end of the training, participants will develop action plans which must be implemented to conclusion in their respective countries. These actions plans will be designed and implemented with MI technical support.

Phase 3: Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop – Participants will be invited to present the results and learnings from their action plan implementation in a synthesis and evaluation

¹ASEAN Investment Report 2017 – Foreign Direct Investment and Economic Zones in ASEAN

workshop in Khon Kaen, Thailand. Participants will also be requested provide recommendations and suggestions on the contents and management of the training program.

2. Training Objectives

- a) Improve/update knowledge base of participants by sharing global, regional, and country-specific status progress on SEZs/CBEZs;
- b) Build capacities of SEZ officials and private sector representatives on various issues related to the management of SEZs (e.g., strategies, policies, and practices; institutional and governance issues; social, economic, and environmental impact; and monitoring and evaluation);
- c) Share best practices on SEZs/CBEZs and provide Lancang-Mekong specific case studies on development of SEZs/CBEZs;
- d) Promote learning exchanges among Lancang-Mekong stakeholders on SEZs/CBEZs; and
- e) Share information in the EZ database to foster investments among Lancang-Mekong member countries.

3. Training Outcomes

At the end of the training, participants should have acquired knowledge and practical skills on the range of presented topics. They will have also gained deeper understanding on SEZs/CBEZs management, SEZs/CBEZs benefits and development challenges, as well as other country-specific issues on economic zones.

Specifically, the training participants are expected to develop:

- a) Greater understanding of overall and specific issues related to SEZs and CBEZs;
- b) Deeper skills in strategic SEZs and CBEZs planning and management to complement existing policies and programs;
- c) Strengthened knowledge and capacities on effective SEZ and CBEZ implementation and management;
- d) Improved SEZs and CBEZs information in the Lancang-Mekong countries;
- e) Enhanced information-sharing mechanism in the EZ database to promote investments in EZ, SEZ, and CBEZs in the Lancang-Mekong countries.

4. Target Group

The training caters to mid-level officials from government ministries and provincial departments, as well as those from academic institutions and business associations from Lancang-Mekong Countries.

Specifically, the training is open to:

- a) Government representatives from the ministries of planning, finance and commerce, as well as other agency officials responsible for EZ, SEZ and/or CBEZ development and customs;
- b) Private sector representatives from business or export associations and banks;
- c) University faculty members and academic experts.

In general, participants should:

- a) Have experience in EZ, SEZ and/or CBEZ policy and strategy development;
- b) Hold a university degree in economics, socioeconomic planning and statistics management, political science or other related fields in the social sciences;
- c) Be proficient in English speaking and writing;
- d) Have experience in cross-cultural exchanges;
- e) Commit to attend the five-day training sessions and complete course requirements.

In addition, MI encourages the participation of

- a) Women and minorities
- b) Persons from border areas with other neighboring target countries or those who are engaged in cross-border or regional trade and investment

Important Criteria for the participants selection are English language proficiency and commit to implement the action plan.

5. Duration and Location

The five-day training program will be held from June 15 to 19, 2020 at the Mekong Institute's Residential Training Center in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

6. Training Content

In this course, participants will explore seven interrelated modules. These will be supported by group exercises, international examples particularly related to the Lancang-Mekong countries context, and case studies.

Table 1. Training Module

Module 1	Management and Promotion of Special Economic Zones in the Lancang–Mekong Countries – A Finding Study
Module 2	Experience and Lessons Learned from Special Economic Zone to Pilot Free Trade Zone
Module 3	Formation of Regional Industrial Value Chain
Module 4	Economic Growth Poles and Globalization and Regional Economic Integration
Module 5	Innovative System and Its Referential Value – The Shenzhen Case
Module 6	SEZ and CBEZ Development Framework
Module 7	Information Sharing and Update on EZ Database

Module 1: Management and Promotion of Special Economic Zones in the Lancang-Mekong Countries — A Finding Study

This module will present preliminary findings and recommendations from the “Study on Management and Promotion of Special Economic Zones in the Lancang-Mekong countries.” The study focused on SEZ planning, SEZ performance, and economic outcomes in consideration of the roles of central governments, local authorities, SEZ developers and investors in managing and promoting investment in SEZs by using the following measures or criteria: (a) location, (b) industry, (c) policies, (d) linkages to local economies, (e) management mechanism, and (f) investment promotion strategies. Furthermore, the module will introduce the Lancang-Mekong Economic Zones Online System, which is a store house of LM-EZ information for promoting economic zone trade and investment and encouraging the economic and social development. It is a network and information sharing tool for stakeholders, beneficiaries, and investors within and outside LM region.

Topics included in this module are as follows:

- a) Findings Study on Management and Promotion of Special Economic Zones in the Lancang-Mekong countries
- b) Introduction to Lancang-Mekong EZs Online System

Module 2: Experience and Lessons Learned from Special Economic Zone to Free Trade Pilot Zone

The module contains an overview of Shenzhen's transformation from a typical special economic zone to the general special economic zone and then to the expanded Pilot Free Trade Zone and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. This proves to be the combined result of “gradient development” and “anti-gradient development,” as well as the outcome of institutional transformation which manifests the intrinsic logic of the Special Economic Zone and the theoretical underpinnings of the China model.

Based on a close case study of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, the module will provide a full account of how the economic zone made full use of its own endowed factors and national system advantages to rapidly complete the transformation from an agrarian to industrial society. It will also detail the successful evolution from post-industrial to a new industrial society marked by high technology

industries in a short period of time. The experimental model demonstrates the “Chinese style” development and its road to modernization.

Topics under this module are:

- a) From Special Economic Zone to Free Trade Pilot Zone—the intrinsic logic and practice of China’s Path, particularly the functions and missions of the Chinese Special Economic Zone
- b) The successful experience and lessons learned from the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone

Module 3: Formation of Regional Industrial Value Chain

This module will cover the following aspects: (a) industries and products at different stages; (b) existing and future industry space layout of the city; (c) improvement of the industry and its spatial distribution; and (d) contributing factors to the formation and changes in industrial spatial distribution. Findings from the research study will also be shared.

The topic included in this module is the “Industry Development and Its Spatial Relation: A Case Study of Shenzhen—China’s First Special Economic Zone.”

Module 4: Economic Growth Poles and Globalization and Regional Economic Integration

This module will examine the five special economic zones established in 1980 and more than a dozen free trade pilot zones of China, including the Shanghai Pudong New Area and Tianjin Binhai New Area. The module will also explore the impetus behind China’s special economic zones and each Mekong country’s economic development paths.

Topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Selection of geographically superior areas to implement differentiated development
- (b) Establishment of a “whole nation system” to focus efforts on great events
- (c) Motivation to break new ground and build new institutions through reform
- (d) Regular creation of innovations to form a strong driving force for development

Through this course, participants will be able to push forward special economic zones through the (a) application of theoretical strategic thinking and practical operation modes; (b) formulation of policies, (c) development of good planning; and (d) implementation of tasks.

The module will also look at two major trends in world economic development: Economic globalization and regional economic integration. The session will examine their profound impacts on the pattern and trend of the world economy. These two trends present the following opportunities and challenges for the countries along the Mekong River basin: (a) they may “hitch a ride” on globalization but may be at a disadvantage or (b) they can huddle together for warmth through regional economic integration but they may also be isolated.

The countermeasures for these are as follows: (a) find development breakthrough; (b) position commanding heights of development, and (c) explore future competitiveness. Through this course, participants will be able to understand the connotation and current status quo of economic globalization and regional economic integration, the status of Mekong River countries in economic globalization, as well as these countries’ characteristics in relation to economic integration.

Through the discussions, participants will be able to grasp opportunities and challenges to sustain economic globalization and regional economic integration, formulate strong policies, and drive the development of both the world economy and the region through “win-win” and “multi-win” strategies.

Topics included in this module are as follows:

- a) Economic growth poles (e.g. Special Economic Zone, Economic Corridor, Free Trade Zone, High Tech Park/Zone)
- b) The choices and paths adapted by each Mekong country for economic development

- c) Opportunities, challenges, and countermeasures of Mekong countries towards economic globalization and regional economic integration

Module 5: Innovative System and its Referential Value—The Shenzhen Case

This module will introduce the take-off and upgrade as two critical turning points within the growth curve of an economy, which decide the forthcoming growth following them. Government and the market force worked together to achieve Shenzhen's sustainable development. Shenzhen showed the world that mass innovation activities can occur under severe resource constraints in a short period of time. The argument is not about who should be the leader or who must have more say in the economy. Instead, it is more about who should take action to pursue a better future for a city. However, it is obvious that government plays an important role in the take-off and upgrading of the economy. At the take-off moment, government created an environment welcoming foreign investments and initiating the formation of industries, while at the upgrade stage, the government developed a high technology friendly environment. On the other hand, the market has contributed to the good performance of private enterprises. More detailed stories and the logic behind these successes will be revealed during the module session.

The topic included in this module is the “Innovation and Upgrading of a Transforming Economy—the Case of Shenzhen's SEZ during its 30-Year Path (1980-2010).”

Module 6: SEZ and CBEZ Development Framework

This module will introduce a strategic perspective on SEZ programs and individual SEZs in the context of national development and investors' interests and expectations. The session will discuss in detail the SEZs' single comprehensive and practical strategy, as well as monitoring and evaluation framework. It will also highlight key implementation SEZ risks and constraints, including successful factors.

Topics included in this module are as follows:

- a) Addressing domestic development challenges: SEZs as tools for domestic development and structural transformation of the economy
- b) Overview of SEZs' performance
- c) Framework for development and/or assessment of SEZs: Preconditions for an SEZ program, its development role and system of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

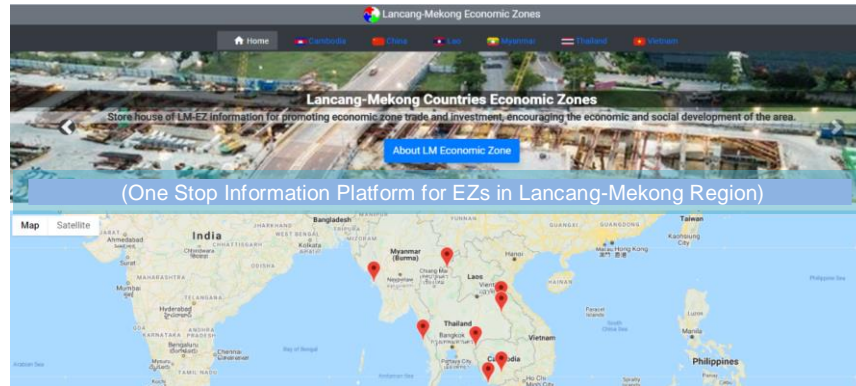
Module 7: Information Sharing/Update on Economic Zone Database

This module will introduce the concept and main functions of the online EZ information database system. A part of the LMC project, the database was created to promote investments in EZ, SEZ, and CBEZs in the Lancang-Mekong countries.

Topics under this module are

- a) Online EZ Information System
- b) Action Plan

At the end of the session, participants are required to provide relevant EZ information on the national, EZ, and company levels at www.lmezs.com. The input of EZ information and participants' dissemination of knowledge and skills gained from the training to stakeholders in their respective countries are part of the action plan.



7. Action Plan Guidance and Preparation

As part of the training program, participants will be required to prepare their action plans to disseminate the knowledge and skills they have learned/gained during the training and collect relevant EZs information for the web base portal at www.lmezs.com. The orientation for action plans, individual and/or joint action plan preparations, as well as group presentations will be delivered on the last day of the training.

Participants should be able to develop feasible action plans to address their group's objectives. An action plan consists of a number of detailed steps that reflect the national or local scenario. It should also include an endowment of clear-cut group work divisions and responsibilities to meet the action plan's objectives.

8. Training Assignments

Training assignments will require participants to practice professional skills and integrate concepts related to EZ/SEZ for their own country by linking international and regional approaches and best practices. In addition, participants will work in groups. Such a structure will promote communication, foster national level collaboration, and build a wide professional network of contacts among participants. Specific assignments will also be provided throughout the course.

The team of resource persons/instructors will comprise international and national experts with significant experience in EZ/SEZ/CBEZ at the international level. The instructors are all experts in their respective areas of competency. The exposure to international practice and expertise will present participants with significant and useful opportunities.

9. Curriculum Design and Methodology

The training was designed to meet capacity building needs and tailored to apply in the regional context. It will engender greater understanding of EZs, SEZs and CBEZs, and by deepening practical knowledge through the application of adult learning principles, presentation of real case studies, adaption of participative approaches, stimulation of knowledge sharing and exchange exercises, as well as networking sessions among participants. Interactive experiential learning will also be employed. The training will be delivered in English and will be executed through:

- a) Lectures and presentations
- b) Plenary discussions, case studies, and group exercises
- c) Role playing and simulation games

As required, all training modules are to be drawn from practical experiences and tailored to meet the needs of stakeholders involved in EZ, SEZ, and CBEZ - related activities. It will also incorporate concrete actions for follow-up activities after the training.

Each training module is designed and delivered using the "Integrated Curriculum" approach. The salient features of this curriculum are that competencies are carefully selected, theoretical concepts are

integrated with skills practice, and essential knowledge are directed to enhance performance. Finally, competencies (e.g., facilitation, presentation, and communication, negotiation, and leadership skills) are applied in all the curriculum's activities.

For each module, participants will go through three progressive stages of the modular training approach as detailed below.

Learning Phase
Each training module will start with participatory training sessions where participants are trained on the concepts, techniques, tools, and effective strategies to develop and promote EZ, SEZ and CBEZ-related initiatives. At this cognitive stage, learner-centered instruction will be applied. The trainer will be the leader of a community of learners. The trainer will devise ways to encourage inquiry, higher order thinking, problem-solving, higher level of literacy, and engagement. This conceptualizing stage will require processing and the drawing on a rich knowledge base, methods, and technology that are appropriate to the content.
Knowledge Application Phase
This competency-based module is classified as a form of work-based learning. Immediately after participants acquire new skills/knowledge, they will carry out their corresponding assignments, (e.g., after completing deliberation on concepts and tools, participants will be given assignments to identify and design a particular activity in groups.
Knowledge Transfer Phase or Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop
There will be a share-to-learn session where each individual/group will present their outputs and share their learning/working experience with others. Lessons learned and practical experiences from actual applications will be exchanged and innovative knowledge and skills will be institutionalized.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

An effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be put in place to assess the progress and measure the results of the interventions. The M&E will be introduced in the pre-, during, and post stages of each modular training approach.

11. Contacts

For more details on the training, please contact MI's Trade and Investment Facilitation Team.

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